

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON

HISTORICAL BASIS, INVOLVEMENTS, AND VALIDITY OF THE OCTOBER 22, 1844, POSITION

A Comprehensive, Documented Study of the 2300-year Time Prophecy;
the Progressive Development of Its Three Structural Dates--the B.C.
457 Autumnal Beginning, the 31 A.D., Spring Crucifixion-Seal, and
the 1844 A.D. Autumnal Ending, With Its True Tenth Day of the True
Seventh Month--Their Fundamental Soundness and Scientific Accuracy.

Part I	Introductory Statement of Problem and Purpose	(L.E.F.)
Part II	Chronological Development up to October 22, 1844	(L.E.F.)
Part III	The October 22 Crisis, and Aftermath	(L.E.F.)
Part IV	Date of Decree to Restore and Build Jerusalem	(L.H.W.)
Part V	Crucifixion Date, and Astronomical Soundness of October 22 .	(G.E.A.)
Part VI	Recapitulation, Conclusions, and Affirmatory Statement . . .	(L.E.F.)

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PART I -- INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

A. Scripture's Longest Time Prophecy. The 2300-year span is the longest of all the allotted time periods of inspired prophecy. It is the most complex of all, in its involvements, because it comprehends a series of subdivisions marked off by events whose synchronizing relationships cannot be disturbed without disrupting the whole divine scheme. The boundaries and divisions of this mighty period are timed by God's great celestial clock of the spheres which swing inerrantly through space, telling off the years, months, days, hours, and minutes with the undeviating precision of Infinity.

The terminal point of this great prophecy became the center of absorbing interest and reverent study back in the early decades of the 19th century. The close of the great 1260-year period--told off by the living God as the era of the Little Horn--having come during the time of the French Revolution, the minds of earnest students of prophecy then turned simultaneously in different lands to the approaching end of the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14, as the time of God's long foretold hour of judgment.

A mighty movement sprang into being, with hundreds of public heralds drawn from the various churches, and tens of thousands of humble believers, all focusing their hopes and expectations within the years 1843 and '44 as the terminal point of this great span. This they believed to be sealed and certified by the crucifixion and the 70-week period. And they understood that the synchronous beginning of these two periods reached back to the 5th century before Christ,

Part I--Introductory Statement--2.

when Persia ruled the known world and made provision for the return of God's oppressed ancient people to their own land, and the restoration of their earthly, typical sanctuary and its service.

The expanding advent movement staked everything upon the historical, chronological, and astronomical accuracy of the dates marking off this prophetic span, and the momentous events for which they stood--dates recorded historically by man, but created and governed by the movements of sun and moon which no man can advance or retard. These are kept under the control of the Omnipotent One Himself, in whose hands time and destiny lie, and Who governs the very basis of man's time records by those fixed laws of the heavens ordained when our solar system came into being, in the beginning.

The highly perfected science of time, together with the modern increase of scientific and mechanical knowledge, has enabled astronomical experts, with their mastery of planetary motion, to mark off all past time. Full and complete tables the events called for by this 2300-year ~~master~~ prophecy, are now available for checking, with the historical records and visual observations of the receding centuries.

B. The Propriety of This Restudy. The conclusions reached relative to the 2300-year prophecy in the great "7th month" phase of the advent movement, from August to October, 1844, are a matter of transcendent importance to us as Seventh-day Adventists, which we may, with every propriety, restudy at this time--for it is the exposition and application of this prophetic-historical truth that constitutes the one supremely distinctive and distinguishing contribution that Seventh-day Adventists make to the full-rounded system of Bible truth held by the Christian church of the centuries. In the ultimate, it is this prophetic truth that constitutes the authorizing warrant for our historical existence, and our special witness as a separate ecclesiastical body.

This foundational character of the sanctuary truth was clearly understood and expressly stated by leading writers in our earliest denominational literature,

as witness these editorial declarations of the Advent Review and the Review and Herald back in 1850 and 1851:

"The subject of the Sanctuary should be carefully examined, as it lies at the foundation of our faith and hope."¹

"This prophetic period [the 2300 days] has been, and still is, the main pillar of the Advent faith. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we have a correct view of the commencement and termination of this period, in order to understand our present position. B.C. 457 was the year presented, and clearly proved by Brother Miller, as the true date for the commencement of the 2300 days. It was published to the world by every Second Advent paper in the land, by books, and by public lectures, as the true date. The proof was so very conclusive that those who examined the point with candor embraced it at once. Learned opponents did not, and could not, show that we were incorrect in dating the 2300 days from B.C. 457. With this clearly ascertained date for the commencement of the main pillar of the 'original' Advent faith, lecturers went forth united to give the judgment hour cry."²

"The 2300 days was the main pillar of the Advent theory. At their termination the Sanctuary was to be cleansed. . . . That the 2300 days commenced B.C. 457, was made clear in 1843, 1844, and has since been settled in the Herald of 1850 and 1851, beyond a doubt. It has been shown that Christ was crucified A.D. 31, in the midst [middle] of the 70th week, therefore the 70 weeks terminated in the autumn of A.D. 34, and the 2300 days consequently terminated in the autumn of 1844."³ [Brackets his.]

Over half a century later, Mrs. E.G. White, appointed messenger to the Advent Movement, penned this expressive statement:

"Satan is striving continually to bring in fanciful suppositions in regard to the sanctuary, degrading the wonderful representations of God and the ministry of Christ for our salvation into something that suits the carnal mind. He removes its presiding power from the hearts of believers, and supplies its place with fantastic theories invented to make void the truths of the atonement, and destroy our confidence in the doctrines which we have held sacred since the third angel's message was first given. Thus he would rob us of our faith in the very message that has made us a separate people, and has given character and power to our work."⁴

And, in subsequent writings, the sanctuary truth is frequently referred to by the same writer, as "the foundation of our faith,"⁵ "the central pillar,"⁶ etc.

¹ White, James, in tipped-in insert on inside cover of Advent Review, 48-page special, Auburn, 1850.

² White, James, "Our Present Position," editorial, Review and Herald, Paris, Me., Dec., 1850, p. 13.

³ W[white]., Review and Herald, Paris, Maine, June 9, 1851, p. 100.

⁴ White, Ellen G., "Special Testimonies," Series B, No. 7, p. 17. (Nov. 20, 1905.)

⁵ White, Ellen G., MS. 20, 1906.

⁶ White, Ellen G., Letter 26, 1897.

Again:

"The sanctuary in heaven is the very center of Christ's work in behalf of men. It concerns every soul living upon the earth. It opens to view the plan of redemption, bringing us down to the very close of time, and revealing the triumphant issue of the contest between righteousness and sin. It is of the utmost importance that all should thoroughly investigate these subjects, and be able to give to every one that asketh them a reason for the hope that is in them."⁷ [Italics ours.]

Concerning the propriety of such reverent investigation, as pertains to one of the major phases and datings of the sanctuary truth, Mrs. White, ~~(in perhaps the most sublime of all her books,)~~ gives this further impressive counsel:

"While the people were assembling at Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, He, the antitypical Lamb, by a voluntary act set Himself apart as an oblation. It would be needful for His church in all succeeding ages to make His death for the sins of the world a subject of deep thought and study. Every fact connected with it should be verified beyond a doubt."⁸ [Italics ours.]

C. The Factors in the Study. The Problem before us--that (1) of determining why and how the Adventists of 1844 ultimately fixed with certainty upon the precise day October 22 as the exact terminus of the 2300 years, and (2) of evaluating the soundness of their reasoning and evidence--necessitates, first of all, the reassembling of the entire historical picture, through the compassing of the voluminous Millerite literature. It involves the reading of the many authorities cited or alluded to by the Millerite scholars, which were really the determining factor in their conclusions.

The validity of October 22, as the true equivalent of the 10th day of the 7th month of the appointed Jewish sacred year, depends, (1) upon the correct determination of the true beginning of the Biblical sacred year; (2) upon locating the true seventh month in that year; and (3) upon the correct reckoning of the true 10th day of that 7th month. But as the Millerites came to their conclusions concerning all three of these factors upon the basis of the Karaite Hebrew reckoning, it becomes necessary in order to determine the validity of those conclusions, for

⁷ White, E.G., Review and Herald, Washington, D.C., Nov. 9, 1905, p. 10.

⁸ White, E.G., "The Desire of Ages," p. 571.

Part I--Introductory Statement--5.

us to thoroughly understand the Karaite position. In other words, it is incumbent upon us not merely to know exactly what was believed, but why the positions taken were right intrinsically. The complex calendrical factors must all be worked through to conclusion in order to determine whether the evidence accepted by the Millerites was sound and invulnerable Biblically, historically, chronologically, and astronomically.

In order to be certain as to the end-year, it is of course necessary to establish the beginning-year beyond successful overthrow. In fact, three great, inseparable dates form the far-flung terminal abutments and the central keystone of this matchless prophetic arch--the B.C. 457 autumnal beginning, the October 22, 1844, autumnal ending for the 2300-year span, and the 31 A.D. spring crucifixion that ties the span together. These were declared by the Millerite students to be inseparable links in the chain of prophetic-historico-astronomical evidence.

The scientific accuracy, therefore, of (1) the 457 date must be traced out on the basis of the synchronizing regnal dates, which have been duly attested, both historically and archaeologically, and which have been properly anchored by well-authenticated eclipses; (2) the astronomical and calendrical accuracy of the 31 A.D. spring-crucifixion--a position that was assumed at the time of the 7th month movement--and the technically astronomical aspects of the Millerite calculations for 1844, must likewise be demonstrated; and (3) the documented, historical portrayal of the early Millerite positions, on through to their ultimate and perfected form, with the precise reasons therefor, and their far-reaching involvements, must all be carefully worked out. Such is the threefold problem before us.

D. Importance of a Proper Solution. As a people, our position on the sanctuary truth touches not merely the Biblical aspect, but it is inseparably historical, chronological, and astronomical in its implications. It embraces not only an exposition of the prophetic time aspect that tallies with inflexible

Part I--Introductory Statement--6.

historical events and their records, but it must comport with the undeviating movements of the sun and moon that measure time for man.

It involves, moreover, the right perception and interpretation of this epochal time-prophecy back in the very days of anticipated fulfilment at the inception of the advent movement. We spring, denominationally, from a recorded historical experience and commitment. As such, the essential positions then taken and since maintained, are either sound and true, or they are false and misleading. They either stand intact under the acid test of historical scrutiny, or they must collapse before a discomfiting exposure of all the facts.

~~Truth, infallible~~
The honor and integrity of Seventh-day Adventism is therefore bound up with the validity of the sanctuary truth, and the soundness of its prophetic foundation and historical fulfilment in the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8 and 9, with the related threefold message of Revelation 14. The sanctuary truth, with these correlated positions developed around the year 1844, constitutes the very keystone in the imposing arch of present truth presented to the world by this people.

Furthermore, our historical appearance as a movement at the precise time specified for heralding the required judgment hour message at the terminus of the 2300 years, was divinely timed in appearance, according to the demands of the prophecy. Any other chronological appearance in history would therefore invalidate it as failing to meet the clear time-requirement of the prophecy. But above all, it must not only appear historically at the time stipulated, but as already stated, it must stake its credibility and its authority, and consequently its right to the ear of mankind, upon the fundamental soundness of the historical fulfillment of the several specifications that constitute its authorizing mandate--the beginning, ending, and crucifixion-seal, at their appointed times. This whole question unavoidably involves, then, the integrity of these three key dates of the great 2300-year sanctuary prophecy. Moreover, the question involves the integrity of the Spirit of prophecy, because of its unequivocal declarations, both upon the general position and the specific dates.

The historically developed judgment-hour message, and the heavenly sanctuary truth which followed--with its Sabbath accompaniment--constitute the basic strata of the great platform of truth attested by the Spirit of prophecy. From the very outset, these have naturally been the object of bitter attack, and will be until the end. This is the firm, immovable platform from which we have been admonished never to step off. It is this to which we are to adhere steadfastly, not moving a peg nor a pin that ties it together as one perfect system of truth. Thus we read:

"I was shown three steps,--the first, second, and third angels' messages. Said my accompanying angel, 'Woe to him who shall move a block or stir a pin of these messages. The true understanding of these messages is of vital importance. The destiny of souls hangs upon the manner in which they are received.' I was again brought down through these messages, and saw how dearly the people of God had purchased their experience. It had been obtained through much suffering and severe conflict. God had led them along step by step, until He had placed them upon a solid, immovable platform. I saw individuals approach the platform and examine the foundation. Some with rejoicing immediately stepped upon it. Others commenced to find fault with the foundation. They wished improvements made, and then the platform would be more perfect, and the people much happier. Some stepped off the platform to examine it, and declared it to be laid wrong. But I saw that nearly all stood firm upon the platform, and exhorted those who had stepped off to cease their complaints; for God was the Master-builder, and they were fighting against Him. They recounted the wonderful work of God, which had led them to the firm platform, and in union raised their eyes to heaven, and with a loud voice glorified God."⁹

It is therefore incumbent upon us to know thoroughly, and at first hand, the exact historical development of the positions we hold today. It is imperative for us to know the full and precise reasons for each of the three structural, historical landmarks of our interpretation of the 2300-year prophecy as developed under the great advent awakening of the first half of the nineteenth century, and climaxing in the 7th month movement of 1844.

E. The Form of Presentation. Parts II and III give a comprehensive survey of the development and involvements of the distinctively historical aspect of the 1844 interpretation of the 2300-year prophecy of Daniel 8:14, which reached its

⁹ White, E.G. ("A Firm Platform"), "Early Writings," Washington, D.C., 1925, pp. 258, 259. Note: The setting focuses this counsel specifically upon rejection, alteration, or abandonment of the historic messages and sanctuary truth under discussion in this study. [Written in 1858.]

Part I--Introductory Statement--8.

peak of accuracy and force shortly before the great disappointment of October 22. Part III closes this historical aspect with a review of the aftermath, in which two distinct attitudes and two Adventist church bodies emerge. And this, for us, is the climax of all--for our denominational history begins at this point. The basic positions on the three key dates, championed in the autumn of 1844, have never been revised--nor have they needed revision--by the Seventh-day Adventist movement that eventuated, and which built its full-rounded superstructure of Biblical truth upon the incontrovertible historical foundations already laid. Our specific contribution as a subsequent movement has been the presentation of the heaven-sent light focused upon the nature of the event that took place upon and following that epochal date of October 22, which not only threw an unsurpassed luster upon the past experience, but gave tremendous significance and force to its future witness.

Be it clearly understood that this is not a study of the doctrinal aspect of the sanctuary truth, which is already available in numerous works, embracing the ministry of our High Priest in the sanctuary above, the two consecutive and definitely timed phases of that ministry, the nature of the judgment and its sequel, and its relation to mankind and to this physical earth. This study is limited solely to the historical and scientific proofs as to the soundness and accuracy of the great structural dates of the 2300-year sanctuary prophecy. And that, as will appear, fully meets the exacting requirements of history, chronology, and astronomy, as well as the inevitable demands of logic and the recognized laws of evidence.

Part IV in the series will demonstrate the technical soundness of the first of the three main historical pillars of the 2300-year sanctuary prophecy--the eclipse-checked accuracy of the B.C. 457 autumnal date as the 7th year of Artaxerxes, the initial year of the 2300-year span. Part V presents the astronomical verity of the 31 A.D. April-crucifixion in the "midst" of the 70th week, as the divinely-designated seal of the inseparable 70-week and 2300-day periods, with

Part I--Introductory Statement--9.

their synchronous beginnings. It will also present certain supplemental and invaluable evidences, and technical facts, relative to the accuracy and scientific soundness of the October 22 date, as the true "10th day of the 7th month" ending of the 2300 years. Then will come, in Part VI, the Summation, Conclusions, and Affirmatory Statement that completes the presentation.

LeRoy Edwin Froom